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NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

24 October 1973

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Joint Soviet-American Reconnaissance to  
Monitor Middle East Cease-Fire

1. This memorandum was written in response to a request from Don Steinger following a discussion which took place at the DCI's morning meeting on 23 October concerning Soviet reconnaissance activity which had occurred the previous day over the Suez Canal area. The DCI discussion centered on the question of Soviet reconnaissance activities and the relationship of these activities to US reconnaissance of the same area. The Director asked to have a paper prepared for his background prior to a WSAG meeting scheduled for 1700 on the 23rd.

2. Steinger called me to outline the topic and asked for a background paper. This memorandum was provided to the DCI in the late afternoon. It was reviewed by Don Steinger and Ed Proctor but received no additional dissemination.

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## MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Joint Soviet-American Reconnaissance to  
Monitor Middle East Cease-Fire

1. This memorandum outlines considerations involved and steps that would be required to implement a proposal to monitor a Middle East cease-fire arrangement by means of internationally sponsored joint Soviet-American reconnaissance of the affected areas. The discussion below focuses only on technical-operational elements of such an arrangement; it does not evaluate political feasibility or related factors.

2. The example, below, is presented as a point of departure to illustrate the range of factors involved in a joint reconnaissance arrangement. The example is based on the premise of a program having broad international involvement under UN auspices. There are alternative and intermediate arrangements which could also be presented. For illustrative purposes, the following assumptions were used:

a. The US and the USSR would announce their joint intention to perform photo reconnaissance of the Middle East cease-fire areas under UN auspices;

b. The "fact of" such reconnaissance and the products and information derived therefrom would be made available on an unrestricted basis to all relevant parties, including the belligerents;

c. An agreement would exist, containing explicit provisions to be monitored.

Reconnaissance Platforms and Operational Coordination

3. The US could perform the required reconnaissance with either SR-71 or U-2 aircraft; the USSR could use the MIG-25 Foxbat (high-altitude, supersonic) or Mandrake (high-altitude, subsonic) reconnaissance aircraft, or even the reconnaissance version of the Bear, turboprop long-range bomber. We have relatively little firm data on the reconnaissance capabilities of the camera systems or mission profiles of the Soviet aircraft.

a. It would be necessary to coordinate flight dates and routes through some joint coordinative mechanism either bilaterally or jointly through the UN. Except for the long-range Bear, Soviet aircraft probably would need to be based in the UAR or Syria. US aircraft could fly from various bases but could operate most efficiently from forward bases.

b. The USSR undoubtedly knows much more about the characteristics and capabilities of the camera systems on the US aircraft than the US knows about Soviet cameras and capabilities. The net intelligence gain or losses to either side through exposure of its technical reconnaissance capabilities, therefore, probably nets out to the benefit of the US. Much of the US technical camera system data has been adapted in the open NASA lunar exploration programs and is widely available.

c. Aside from coordinating dates and general flight routes, there would need to be little additional operational interaction or exposure. Both parties would be able to operate independently. We do not know how far to either side of the flight path useful Soviet photography would extend--this could affect flight planning if the effective swath of Soviet systems is considerably narrower than for US aircraft.

Film Processing and Dissemination

4. Duplicate positives of the relevant film could be processed unilaterally by each side and either exchanged or delivered for joint review under UN auspices. Mission film indices relating the aircraft track to frame numbers and necessary data would have to be provided. Some technical data concerning the camera systems would need to be exchanged in order to perform photogrammetric functions such as mensuration, etc. These would not need to be extensive.

a. If film is exchanged, then requirements would be established to deliver agreed duplicate positives to identified recipients (US, USSR, UAR, Israel, UN, etc.) together with necessary index materials at times and places specified by agreement. Under this option, each party would be made responsible to read out the photography and identify any questionable information or activity to a joint body, equivalent to a consultative commission.

b. If film were disseminated primarily to a UN-sponsored photo-interpretative unit, it would maximize the international involvement but be a complicated and difficult unit to establish, manage, support, etc.

Control and Handling of Derived Information and Related Data

5. After establishing a reference baseline which catalogued the relevant installations, dispositions, etc., each new increment of photography must be reviewed systematically and used to update or modify the base.

a. Arrangements would need to be made to maintain and update a common data base, including one which could be jointly maintained under UN auspices.

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b. It would be necessary to develop and coordinate common terminology, criteria, and interpretations to be placed on provisions of any agreement.

c. Ground rules would need to be developed concerning the releasability and public dissemination of information or film (prints). This would include the delineation of the procedures by which information derived from photography would be made available to such ground observers as may be established or such other instrumentalities for policing the cease-fire.

#### Problem Areas

6. While there are many aspects to a joint monitoring arrangement which could be worked out bilaterally, there are some aspects which would have to be agreed in detail for such a program to be effective:

a. The photography would regularly contain tactical intelligence data of value to the belligerents themselves which potentially could be used to the disadvantage of either side in limited operations. The Arabs and Israelis would therefore need to agree to the passage and handling of such information.

b. Careful joint planning would be required in starting up, continuing and providing for the phase-down or termination of such a joint reconnaissance program.

c. Careful agreements would need to be reached on the geographic limitations of reconnaissance as well as the activities which require monitoring--for example, questions involving rear activities and build-ups, re-supply, movement or changes in the disposition of rear or supporting elements, etc.